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A TRAGEDY IN PRINTER'S INK

by WALLACE IRWIN

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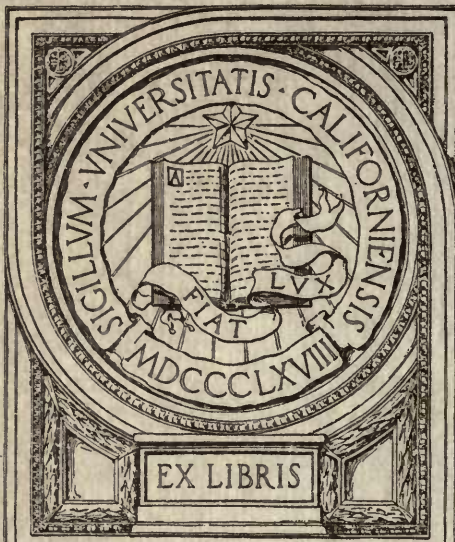

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A TRAGEDY IN PRINTER'S INK

BY

WALLACE IRWIN

To which are added a few Quotations taken from Letters and Magazines Commenting on Good Printing

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO
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SAN FRANCISCO

A TRAGEDY IN PRINTER'S INK

¶ The Printing Art, Cambridge: Mention was made in this department last month of some very handsome specimens of printing received from Taylor, Nash & Taylor of San Francisco. Since then a few other examples have come to hand which are all up to the same high standard. It is difficult to describe how charming is the appearance of the book, "A Bit of Old China," which will be prized highly by all lovers of beautiful printing. It is set in Bookman with double rule borders in a rich orange, and is printed on the chamois color of Normandy Vellum. This stock has a slight pink tinge which harmonizes well with the orange ink used. The Japan Paper Company's Haikwan Bamboo is used for the double cover, which is printed in gold and orange. The booklet is enclosed in an envelope of the same stock, on which is printed part of the cover design. There is not space here to describe the other examples, all of which show charming and unusual color schemes, as well as very pleasing typography. ¶ The American Printer, New York: A firm that is upholding the prestige of the printing business in the United States is Taylor, Nash & Taylor of San Francisco, the personnel of which was dwelt upon in the January number. On the insert opposite is presented a program produced a few months ago by this Pacific Coast firm of good printers, and there is shown on this page a group of specimens composed mainly of type founders' type, rule and ornament. Such work is of the kind one wishes to keep, and it should be an encouragement for other printers in America to aim for the same high ideals in typography. Many of the announcements and other work produced by this firm are printed upon hand-made paper, which gives that richness of effect that so satisfactorily supports good typographic effort. ¶ San Francisco Chronicle: Clarence T. Urmy's poems are very well known. For years he has been writing verse in praise of California. Some of his new poems are published in a dainty volume entitled "A California Troubadour." The publisher has given the book a beautiful dress, the pages having red-line border and the paper being an imitation of parchment. The printing and presswork by Taylor, Nash & Taylor are something which will delight any lover of good book work. ¶ The Graphic Arts, Boston: There is no mistaking the individualistic style and fine workmanship of the Christmas brochure which you so kindly sent to us. Please accept our thanks for remembering us. We already have in hand several pieces of your work and we hope to arrange before long to make some editorial use of this with appreciative credit to you. ¶ Printing Trade News, New York: One of the most beautiful pieces of printing that was ever executed was recently turned out by Taylor, Nash & Taylor, 412 Mission Street, San Francisco.

JOHANNUS was a printer man
Well set from A to Z,
But much besmear'd with printer's ink,
A black-faced type was he.

And well he loved a queenly maid,
The fair Elvira Green,
As beautiful a Roman type
As ever there was seen.

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A TRAGEDY IN PRINTER'S INK

This was an exquisitely printed copy of Dickens' "Christmas." This famous little essay was done up into a small book, free from all advertising matter. The book was executed in a style that is peculiar to the house of Taylor, Nash & Taylor, which concern turns out a product that for beauty of design and adherence to all the correct principles of typography excels that of any other printing house in the United States. This delightful book was a 450 edition; 200 were sold and 250 distributed among the friends of the company. The book will be kept and treasured by all those receiving it who possess a love for printed matter of the better kind. ¶ THOMAS NAST FAIRBANKS, Japan Paper Company, New York: To say that the samples you sent me interested me would be to put it mildly. They not only filled me with admiration, but made me feel that such a collection should have some form of publicity that would serve to stimulate the so-called foremost printers of the East to a realization of the fact that they are not nearly so competent as their traditional complacency leads them to believe. No criticism can be made of the mechanical execution of your work and no criticism can be made of the taste, and above all no comparison can be made of the marvelous way in which you handle rules and the infinite variety of forms in which you place them. Personally I have always been brought up to hate rules and in my early printing work I never would use them, and it was not until I began to see your work that I ever countenanced them. That you have converted me is shown by the fact that you are doing a specimen sheet for us, and I only wish that you were more closely in touch and that the distance was not so great so that we could cooperate oftener. I should like to sit down and write a detailed review of all of these examples and tell you just what I think of them, but you know that they are good and you know how inadequate a means a letter is to express such things. Your handling of a commercial catalogue such as "California's Greatest Industry" presents a type page that answers all the commercial requirements that would serve to ruin such a catalogue and yet permits of a decorative treatment that is delightful. The color and register that you have used in the "Christmas in Bohemia" and the "Lamb in Bohemia" are beautiful. "Into the Light" interests me particularly. Was this printed for commercial sale, and, if so, was it successful? It certainly ought to be and I am glad to possess this copy. I must not undertake to treat each one of these as I should like to, but I cannot pass the "Memorial to Frank Norris" without congratulating you on every detail of this work, but especially the mechanical execution of the gold rule. You may rest assured that all of these examples will be very highly treasured by us in New

> So poor Johannus' passion raged
> Tempestuous as a storm,
> When e'er he saw his lady love's
> Divinely printed form.
>
> But when the heartless maiden viewed
> Johannus' love-lorn fix,
> She quickly took his measure and
> Was crosser than two sticks.

York and that they will be given every bit of publicity that we are able to accomplish. In closing I might add that I am glad to see you have the courage to use the Alberti, as this is my favorite color and seems to be above the heads of the average printer as it is difficult to treat.

¶ The Printing Art, Cambridge: A firm that has assuredly come into the front rank of high-grade printers is Taylor, Nash & Taylor of San Francisco. A large collection of samples received lately is of perhaps a higher average of excellence than any similar collection that has been submitted to this department. This excellence is due in part to the careful typography and good presswork, but more to the taste displayed in choosing inks that harmonize with the various papers selected. The hand-made stocks of the Japan Paper Company are used almost exclusively, and seldom have we seen them used to better advantage. Many of the examples are circulars and announcements, all of which are on hand-made papers and enclosed in envelopes to match. Perhaps the best — if a choice must be made among others equally handsome — is a circular sent out by Taylor, Nash & Taylor announcing the accession of a new member to their staff. This is set in Caslon capitals and printed in olive green on hand-made Florentine of a delicate green color, the trade-mark of the firm being in red and gold. Printed on the same stock, and more interesting typographically, is a Christmas Greeting sent out by the San Francisco branch of the American Type Founders Company. Here red and gold are also used, but the green is of a darker shade, as befits the Christmas season, and the type face is Cloister. As the greeting is a reprint of Tennyson's poem, "Ring Out, Wild Bells," Christmas bells are used for the decoration. A programme of a memorial meeting, on one of the dark shades of Ancona, printed in black and gold, deserves a paragraph by itself. A charming little book of poetry, "Into the Light," by Edward Robeson Taylor, set in Bodoni, printed in red and black on hand-made paper from Guadalajara, Spain, and bound in boards, will appeal to every book lover. "Friendship" is the title of a little pamphlet set in Caslon which will please the most fastidious. "California's Greatest Industry" is a booklet of a more commercial character, but it is above the average of its kind. It is printed in red and black on Warren's Cameo Sepia with a cover of Cameo Post Card. A booklet for the Panama-Pacific Exposition has a cover of white Cameo Post Card, the text pages being on Seymour Company's Exeter Antique Book. The type used is Bodoni, and the color scheme, blue and black, is a charming one.

"Elvira fair," the swain began,
Poetic from the start,
"Your sacred name in upper case
Is graven on my heart;

"I work my galleys like a slave
Who bitter chains endures,
But as I labor at my forms
I see no form but yours."

¶ George French, Boston: I have several times been over the book, "A California Troubadour," each time with added admiration. It seems to me an admirable piece of

work—and very much more. It is difficult to find a flaw in it. I have not yet found one, looking at it from what was evidently your viewpoint—your motive. I shall place it with the few books that I keep apart from the general ruck of my library, because it is so admirable, and so admirably different; but first I shall find time to read it, as I believe you told me that it will bear reading. I would appreciate it if you would send me more samples of your work, that I may get a better idea of the average work of your shop, which I am sure is high and fine. ¶ The Printing Art, Cambridge: One of the handsomest specimens of printing this magazine has received in several months is a program entitled "Music of Bohemia," which bears the imprint of Taylor, Nash & Taylor of San Francisco. It is printed in orange and brown on cafe color Old Hampshire Bond with an Old Hampshire Bond cover of the same color, and is set in the American Type Founders Company's Bodoni type. It is an interesting demonstration of the suitability of Old Hampshire Bond for booklet purposes. Another booklet received from Taylor, Nash & Taylor is a real estate pamphlet printed on Cameo, the illustrations being mezzograph engravings. ¶ L. Kreiss & Sons, San Francisco: We desire to express our appreciation of this new letter-head which you have just planned and delivered to us. It is a beautiful piece of typographic art, being far removed from the commonplace. ¶ Keyston Bros., San Francisco: We are in receipt of catalogues as per copy submitted, and congratulate you upon turning out the finest piece of printing of this character that we have ever seen. We are perfectly satisfied in every manner with the treatment afforded us, and you may feel confident that when we are compiling other catalogues you will hear from us. The services you have rendered us have been efficient and most satisfactory in every respect. ¶ Joseph D. Redding, San Francisco: Permit me to congratulate you on the beautiful work you have done in bringing out the Grove Play Book this year, "The Atonement of Pan." The publication is a delight to the eye, showing great taste in the selection of paper, type, color and treatment. I do not believe that the edition could be published more beautifully in this country. ¶ San Francisco Chronicle: "What Christmas Is As We Grow Older," an eloquent essay by Charles Dickens, has been made into a beautiful little book by Taylor, Nash & Taylor. These accomplished printers have issued a limited edition of this little book, printed on Shogun hand-made paper, which it is a delight to read. The type is clear and the impression is perfect. Bound in brown boards with vellum back, this book is an artistic souvenir of the greatest day in the Christian year. Dickens pleaded in eloquent words for a celebration of the day that

"Correct your errors, sir," she said,
The while she held aloof,
"If you would prove the things you say
Then let me read your proof."

"No proof have I," Johannus cried,
"Because my hot distress
Has melted all my metal down
Before it went to press."

would include all who had gone before into a brighter world, and we fancy as people grow older they take more comfort in the thought that the beloved dead are not shut out from the observance of this brightest day of Yule-tide. ¶ COOPER ADVERTISING Co., San Francisco: You have heard it said, "It is impossible to get good printing done in San Francisco." If those who make remarks like that just quoted above could see that exquisitely printed little book, "What Christmas Is As We Grow Older," they would know there is at least one house in San Francisco that can execute a piece of typography that is in the fullest sense an example of "Art" in printing. We congratulate you on this excellent representation of "fine printing." ¶ D. B. UPDIKE, The Merrymount Press, Boston: I am ever so much obliged for the book, which I think is charmingly done and beautifully printed. I am very glad that you are doing this kind of thing. Thank you again for it. ¶ RICHARD TRACY STEVENS, Japan Paper Company, New York: I have examined with great interest the collection of specimens of your recent work in booklets, circulars, and announcement cards. You certainly show the greatest taste in designing and printing these things, and I only wish we had about twenty men in this part of the country as capable and enterprising as your good selves. I hope you will be rewarded by having all the business you can possibly take care of, and I shall look forward with great interest to the future good things which you bring out. ¶ THE PRINTING ART, Cambridge: This is to acknowledge the receipt of the Christmas folder issued by your firm, and to advise you that this design will most likely appear in the Christmas number of the 1912 issue of "The Printing Art." It is placed with the material available for that number. This is one of the cleverest of the many hundred designs received during the past few days. ¶ J. W. BUTLER PAPER COMPANY, Chicago: We are in receipt of our announcement to sell to printers only, which you produced for us in such an excellent manner. It is surely a work of art and should attract the attention of the printers in the California territory from this standpoint, if from no other. ¶ SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE: In "The Printing Art" for June, 1912, seven pages are devoted to an exhibit of the artistic typography of Taylor, Nash & Taylor of San Francisco. Among these are pages from Charles Warren Stoddard's "A Bit of Old China" and Clarence Urmy's "A California Troubadour," published by A. M. Robertson. This work by a local firm is not surpassed by anything from the great publishing houses of the East, and in artistic arrangement of type and the selection of colored borders it is hard to find its equal. ¶ PRINTING TRADE NEWS, New York: We wish to acknowledge receipt of your strikingly original little

"Nay, nay, I know my P's and Q's,"
The haughty maid replied;
"Methinks you've dropped a paragraph
Or that your reason's pied.

"No Printer's Union can compel—
Thou ink-bespattered squinter—
An independent maid like me
To union with a printer."

pamphlet, "Tiddledeedum and Tiddledeedee," which we find to be so attractive as to be worthy of praise, and it will appear in the "Printing Trade News," with due credit to you, in an early number. We notice that you intend to publish at an early date three more of these unique publications, and we should be pleased to have you send these to us as soon as they are issued. We should like to take this opportunity of commending you on the excellent advertising your concern is doing. It ranks in the fore of any printer's advertising we have ever seen, and will help in the eventual nullification of the statement made by George Hough Perry of New York, "that the Printer is the worst of all Advertisers." ¶CHRISTIAN HERALD, New York: We are in receipt of the "Memorial Program," and wish to thank you very much for your kindness in sending it to us. It is exceedingly successfully designed and its whole typography and arrangement reflect great credit. ¶AMERICAN TYPE FOUNDERS COMPANY—A letter from Mr. George L. Alexander, San Francisco, to Mr. F. B. Berry, Jersey City: The only credit I can take for our holiday folder is that of selecting a good printer. I asked Taylor, Nash & Taylor to get up something for me and refused to give them a single suggestion. They gave their idea as to what they thought would be proper, and I approved it. They showed me a proof, and I approved it. They printed the job, and everybody approved that, and the approval of your good self is worth all the rest. ¶ADVERTISING & SELLING, New York: "Tiddledeedum and Tiddledeedee" just received, and on its general appearance and make-up you are to be congratulated. We are sure we shall enjoy reading it, and we hope to have the pleasure of receiving also the three booklets by Wallace Irwin, which are in preparation. If this is a sample of the class of work which the two "little devils" in your "Printery" turn out, you undoubtedly should have no trouble in securing a 100 per cent result on these booklets. ¶C. C. RONALDS, The Herald Press, Montreal: When I was in New York recently, I had the pleasure of seeing quite a few beautiful examples of your work which you had sent to the Japan Paper Company. It is so seldom we come across anything that even approaches the excellence of your work, that we are going to take the liberty of requesting that you make us up a little batch of samples and send them to us. ¶THE GRAPHIC ARTS, Boston: We are glad that you thought to send us such delightful specimens of your recent work. Just as it seems strange that some of our comparatively young Western cities should lead the older cities of the East in civic enterprise, it is surprising that you, way out there in San Francisco, should be one of the first of American printers to prove, and prove conclusively, that there is a mar-

"Thou thinkest me a scab," he gasped,
And groaned an inky groan;
"Beware the day thou see'st my form
Stone-dead upon the stone!"

So straight he took a benzine can
(In lieu of dynamite)
And blew his wretched form into
A million fragments quite.

ket for printing which has a special cash value on account of the knowledge and good taste displayed in its make-up. Furthermore, you have demonstrated that the chance to succeed in printing is open to all those engaged in this work. When one stops to think that every printer has the same materials at his command, has the same opportunity to use his head, the business of printing may be looked upon as a race based on knowledge and skill. The fact that so few printers run but such a short distance in a business way proves that they are limited and have no resources such as imagination and the ability to study the methods which make others successful. We congratulate you upon the character and expression you put into your work, and it is easy to see that this element, so entirely outside of mechanical efficiency, is appreciated by users of printing in your territory. Nothing does so much toward removing the "black walnut" bogy from the printing business as good examples of work well done. ¶ The Printing Art, Cambridge: A charming little announcement, set in Forum capitals and printed in brown and yellow on one of the Japan Paper Company's Italian hand-made papers, has been received from John Howell, San Francisco, who is an importer of fine and rare books. Bearing the imprint of Taylor, Nash & Taylor of that city, it is, of course, a typographic model. ¶ Dr. W. A. Brewer, California Book-plate Society: I want to thank you very much indeed for the "Announcement." Such printing as that is a joy forever. ¶ Albert M. Bender, San Francisco: I am most fortunate in being the recipient of a gift book from your presses entitled, "What Christmas Is as We Grow Older," by Charles Dickens. All genuine book lovers will delight in adding this creation of the book-beautiful to their literary treasures, for in all the constituents of good book-making, such as the type, paper, binding and subject, this little volume fulfils the aim of the greatest craftsmen of our time to produce works which would be a pleasure to look upon as well as to read. ¶ L. Averill Cole, Boston: I can't thank you enough for the little book and the other Christmas poem you sent me. You were so thoughtful to remember that good printing does especially interest me. I frequently see paragraphs on your work, in printers' journals, and it's nice to know that commercial workers also appreciate you in your types and paper. It does not need my word to tell you how good your work really is. ¶ James D. Blake, San Francisco: The charming little Christmas volume did not reach me until after the first of the year, but on the whole I am thankful for the delay. The little book helped me prolong the Christmas spirit so that now, reading "What Christmas Is As We Grow Older," nearly a month after the Yule celebration, I feel that with a little

And none denied Johannus was
Quite permanently dead,
And none denied that black-faced type
Was well distributed.

But false Elvira quickly wed
A little stunted shaver,
Who labored as apprentice for
A second-rate engraver.

book like yours to keep one company, the Christmas spirit may be cultivated throughout the year. As a piece of printing the book is a joy. I have held each page to the light and scrutinized the justification, line for line; I have subjected the margins to a metric rule, and have gloated over the diagonals. It is as perfect a piece of printing as I have ever had the pleasure of possessing. ¶ Leo Kaufmann, San Francisco: I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your delightful little booklet, entitled "What Christmas Is As We Grow Older." I appreciate your thoughtfulness in the premises, and were it not for the fact that all of your work bears the stamp of art and genius, I would say that in this little gift you have demonstrated what may be accomplished with type and ink. ¶ The Printing Art, Cambridge: The Panama-Pacific International Exposition, to be held in San Francisco, is sending out some effective printed publicity. A most attractive booklet is one giving popular information about the event. This is set in Bodoni type, and printed in double-tone ink on S. D. Warren & Co.'s Sepia Cameo Plate, Cameo Plate Post Card of the same color being used for the cover. Another very interesting booklet gives information for exhibitors. This is set in Old Style Antique type, and is printed in brown ink on Sepia Cameo, Sepia Cameo Post Card being used for the cover. Both of these booklets were produced by Taylor, Nash & Taylor, and are gotten up in the attractive manner one expects of printing produced by that firm. ¶ Keystone Type Foundry, San Francisco: Your little book, "What Christmas Is As We Grow Older," was received, and to say that we were pleased is indeed a very mild way of telling you of our deep appreciation. The book is a beautiful piece of work, showing the thought and care of the Artist and Master Printer. It is indeed a great privilege and education to the student of "The Art Preservative" to be numbered among those on your mail list, and to have the pleasure of receiving the beautiful samples of work sent from time to time. ¶ The American Printer, New York: Your letter of March 3d and specimens of printing were received, and we wish to thank you for sending them to us. The work is of such an exceptionally fine quality that we are acknowledging it by a special letter instead of the usual form letter that we use for specimens of printing. The work you are turning out is simply remarkable for its artistic quality, and it gives us great pleasure to examine the packages as they are received from you. ¶ Robert John, Santa Rosa, California: I want to thank you most heartily for the beautiful Christmas book, entitled "What Christmas Is As We Grow Older," which you sent me. It is indeed a masterpiece in bookmaking, and I believe that if Mr. Dickens were alive he would be very proud of you.

> Yet when he printed on her brow
> His zincotype caress,
> The kiss-and-squeeze were, after all,
> No more than printing-press.
>
> And those who saw the couple wed,
> E'en to this day declare
> Their marriage was from first to last
> The stereotyped affair.

OF THIS BOOKLET 1500 COPIES
WERE PRINTED IN THE MONTH
OF OCTOBER AND YEAR 1913

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EDITION OF 150 PRINTED ON
KELMSCOTT HANDMADE PAPER

//.

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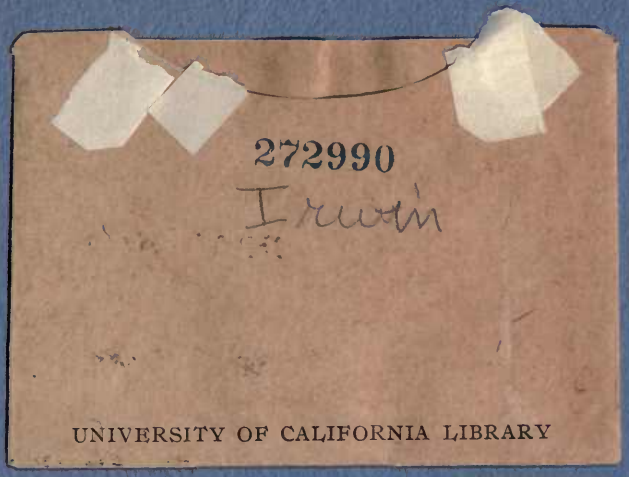
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